

As governor, of course I am prejudice, but I can't think of a state in this nation whose people are more kind, compassionate and generous than the citizens of South Dakota. South Dakotans believe it is our responsibility and our privilege to help our neighbor; whether that neighbor lives next door or across the state.

As a lifelong resident of South Dakota, I've witnessed thousands of acts of kindness and generosity by our citizens. I remember the outpouring of help and donations when a tornado struck the town of Manchester. I remember the way people pitched in to help each other during the blizzards and floods of 1997. I've read story after story about communities holding benefits for neighbors who are sick, who've lost their home to a fire, or are in some way in need. I've looked into the face of the members of our National Guard units at their deployment ceremonies. In their faces, I saw that South Dakota spirit of giving to others by their willingness to leave home and family to protect our country and our state. We truly are a generous and compassionate people.

The most generous and precious gift we can give someone is the Gift of Life - a tissue or organ donation. Sixteen people die needlessly every day in this country waiting for an organ donation, people who are our family, our friends, our neighbors, our fellow South Dakotans. There is no greater gift we can give our fellow citizens than the Gift of Life. Won't you please join me in becoming an organ donor?

By becoming an organ donor you have the potential to:

- Let a child see her parent's faces for the first time,
- Let a father see his son graduate from college,
- Let a mother see her daughter walk down the aisle on her father's arm,
- Let a teacher return to her students because she no longer relies on a kidney dialysis machine,
- Let a grandmother grow old gracefully while watching her grandchildren grow to adulthood.

Please show that generous South Dakota spirit and become an organ donor. Let's donate life!

Thank you,
Mike Rounds
Mike Rounds

What do all these South Dakotans have in common?





They all received the Gift of Life Thanks to the compassion of people like these South Dakotans.

There is no greater gift than the Gift of Life. This gift is extended through the generous act of organ donation. Eighty percent of the public say they want to be organ donors, yet surprisingly, only 40 percent of South Dakotans indicate their wishes on their driver licenses.

At the time to donate needs to be made, families are often so overwhelmed with grief they find it difficult to honor their loved one's request. Make this decision easier on your family and friends by designating your desire to be an organ and tissue donor on your driver license or personal identification card. To make your family and friends comfortable with your wishes, be sure to visit with them and explain why being a donor is important to you.

The need for organ donors in the United States has never been greater. This past year an all-time record was reached;

a record no one was trying to achieve. The record - over 80,000 Americans are waiting to receive lifesaving organ transplants. Nearly 2,600 individuals waiting for an organ transplant are from our federally designated region, which consists of South Dakota, North Dakota, Minnesota and portions of Wisconsin. Each and every day people die while waiting for that Gift of Life.

You can help. By becoming an organ donor, you can save up to eight lives. By becoming a tissue donor, you can improve the lives of up to 40 people.

How can I become an organ donor? Through the South Dakota Driver Licensing program, you can become a donor by designating your wishes on your driver license or personal identification card at the time you renew your license.

Or, if you didn't designate your desire to be an organ donor at the time you renewed your license, you don't have to wait.

You can complete the necessary form at your local driver license exam station or on the web site : <http://www.state.sd.us/dps/dl/organ.html>. Once you complete this form, an organ donor sticker will be provided to you to place on your driver license or personal identification card. By making the decision to become an organ donor, you have the power to give the Gift of Life.

